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General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

276th meeting

Wednesday, 6 December 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Oh Joon ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Chairman: I declare open the 2007 organizational session of the Disarmament Commission.

As in past years, the Commission has convened today for a brief session to deal with organizational matters, including the election of the Chairman and of other members of the Bureau for 2007 and the adoption of a provisional agenda for the next substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

As far as the appointment of the chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission is concerned, we are not going to take up that issue, because, in accordance with General Assembly decision 52/492 of 8 September 1998, both Chairmen were elected for the full three-year cycle. Thus, Mr. Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou of Benin and Mr. Carlos Sergio Sobral Duarte of Brazil will continue to lead the deliberations of the Working Groups. Since that requires a serious personal commitment on their part, we thank them on behalf of the Commission.

Adoption of the agenda

The Chairman: I wish now to draw the Commission's attention to the provisional agenda for this organizational session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.58, which is before members. Are there any comments on this draft agenda? If I hear none, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.58.

The agenda was adopted.

Election of the Chairman and other officers

The Chairman: In accordance with the established practice of rotation, it is the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States that has the honour to nominate the candidate for the post of Chairman of the Commission for its 2007 substantive session. I have received a note from the Chairman of that Group informing me that the Group has endorsed a candidate.

Thus it is my distinct pleasure to give the floor to the representative of Grenada to the United Nations to present to the Commission the candidate for the post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 2007 substantive session.

Ms. Rouse (Grenada): On behalf of the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I have the distinct honour to recommend to the Committee His Excellency Mr. Elbio O. Rosselli, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Uruguay, to serve as Chairman of the Commission for its 2007 substantive session.

Ambassador Rosselli assumes this post with a wealth of experience and diplomatic skills, having joined the foreign service of his country in 1976. He has served in a number of posts, including in the European Community. The Ambassador has also distinguished himself as chairman and a member of

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several General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and World Trade Organization dispute settlement panels.

The States members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States are confident that Ambassador Rosselli will discharge his duties with efficiency and dedication and that he will represent the region well in contributing to security and disarmament throughout the world.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Grenada for her nomination of His Excellency Ambassador Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations, for the post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect Ambassador Elbio Rosselli Chairman of the Commission for its 2007 substantive session by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: On behalf of the Commission and on my own account, I congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Elbio Rosselli on his election to this high Office. I express a commonly shared view when I say that we are looking forward to benefiting from his wide experience and diplomatic skills. We wish him success in discharging his new, important duties. For our part, we will remain at his service with support and counsel, as necessary.

With those brief remarks, I invite His Excellency Ambassador Elbio Rosselli to take his place at the podium and to assume the chairmanship.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) took the Chair.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like, first of all, to express my appreciation to Mr. Oh Joon and to congratulate him on his excellent work as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission during its substantive session in April 2006. I would also like to thank my regional group — the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States — for having placed their trust in me to chair the forthcoming session of the Disarmament Commission. It is an honour for Uruguay that its representative will be guiding such an important deliberative body.

It will be a particular challenge to chair the Disarmament Commission at its next substantive session, give a context characterized by a lack of major achievements in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The current context of multilateral disarmament negotiations is not very encouraging. The Conference on Disarmament was not able to adopt a programme of work enabling it to renew its substantive negotiations. The Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which took place here in New York in July 2006, did not produce a substantive outcome. The tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has passed, but the Treaty has not yet entered into force because of the lack of necessary ratifications by the annex II countries.

Next year we will begin a new review process for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — the cornerstone of the international security system. Unfortunately, we have not been able to achieve significant progress at the NPT Review Conferences to date. At the 2005 Review Conference, we were unable to come up with specific progressive measures in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in keeping with the three-step programme agreed at the 2000 Review Conference.

The current disarmament situation as I have just described it does not, however, prevent the Commission from carrying out its essential functions as a specialized deliberative body within the multilateral disarmament mechanisms of the United Nations.

I trust that the Commission will be able to come up with concrete recommendations and suggestions that will make it possible to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee of the General Assembly. I will try to work jointly with the Chairmen of the two Working Groups to formulate creative recommendations that will enable us to fulfil our mandate in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as with regard to confidence-building measures in the sphere of conventional weapons. I hope that I will be able to count on the valuable support of members in seeking to attain our objectives.

We shall now proceed to the election of other officers of the Disarmament Commission.

As is the case with the Chairman, the other officers of the Bureau are elected on the basis of the established principle of rotation. Accordingly, it is the turn of the Group of Asian States to nominate the Rapporteur of the Commission for the 2007 substantive session. That Group is still undertaking necessary consultations and will soon be in a position to nominate candidates for the post Rapporteur. The same applies to some groups' nominations for posts of Vice-Chairperson.

We shall now proceed with the election of other members of the Bureau, that is, the eight Vice-Chairpersons. In this connection, I give the floor to the representative of Croatia to nominate candidates from the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Muharemi (Croatia): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I have the pleasure of nominating two candidates for the post of Vice-Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 2007: Mr. Jacek Januchowski of the Permanent Mission of Poland, and Mr. Željko Vukobratović of the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Malta, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Bonavia (Malta): In its capacity as Chair of the Group of Western European and other States for the month of December, the Maltese delegation has the pleasure of announcing the candidature of Mr. Bernd Heinze, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Germany, and Mr. Roman Hunger, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland, to fill two vacancies for the post of Vice-Chairperson of the Disarmament Commission for its substantive session, to be held in April 2007.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Grenada, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American Caribbean States.

Ms. Rouse (Grenada): On behalf of the States members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, I have the honour to nominate Mr. Ricardo Morote of Peru to serve as Vice-Chairperson for the 2007 substantive session.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I note that consultations are continuing within the African Group and the Asian Group with respect to their proposals for vice-chairmanships.

We have thus completed this stage of the process of nominations. The Group of Eastern European States has endorsed the candidacies of Mr. Jacek Januchowsky of Poland and Mr. Željko Vukobratović of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has endorsed the candidacy of Mr. Ricardo Morote of Peru. The Group of Western European and other States has endorsed the candidacies of Mr. Roman Hunger of Switzerland and Mr. Bernd Heinze of Germany for posts of Vice-Chairperson of the Commission.

In the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Peru, Poland and Switzerland as Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission for the 2007 substantive session by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me on behalf of the Commission to warmly congratulate the newly elected Vice-Chairpersons and to wish them success in discharging their duties. I am looking forward to working with them and counting on their important counsel.

As I said earlier, consultations continue within two regional groups on candidacies for vacant posts. Therefore, I would suggest that the election of the remaining Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur be taken up at a later stage.

Draft provisional agenda for the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission in 2007

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): As members of the Commission will recall, the First Committee has recommended for adoption by the General Assembly a draft resolution that has specific bearing on the work of our Commission. For the sake of clarity, I would like to refer to this resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.11, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", was adopted by the First Committee on 25 October under agenda item 92 (d). The relevant paragraphs of that draft resolution — namely, operative paragraphs 7 and 8 — read as follows.

"*Recommends* that the Disarmament Commission continue the consideration of the following items at its 2007 substantive session:

"(a) Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons;

"(b) Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons;

"*Requests* the Disarmament Commission to meet for a period not exceeding three weeks during 2007, namely from 9 to 27 April, and to submit a substantive report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session."

The draft provisional agenda for the 2007 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is contained in A/CN.10/L.59. I propose that the Commission now formally adopt the draft provisional agenda. In the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the draft provisional agenda for the 2007 substantive session as contained in document A/CN.10/L.59.

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): The Commission is also invited to take note of document A/CN.10/2007/CRP.1, containing the provisional programme of work and timetable, which set out detailed information on the first week of our future work. May I take it that the Commission takes note of the general programme of work and timetable for its 2007 substantive session?

It was so decided.

Organizational matters

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Having considered the provisional agenda and programme of work for the 2007 substantive session, let us also address the establishment of the Working Groups to consider our two substantive agenda items.

I propose that we re-establish Working Groups I and II to consider agenda items 4 and 5, respectively. Moreover, as in previous years, we have to establish a Committee of the Whole to deal with other substantive and organizational matters.

If there are no comments, I will take it that the Commission wishes to establish those three bodies.

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to note that according to established practice all organizational matters should be concluded at the organizational session of the Disarmament Commission. Unfortunately, as I have already informed the Commission, we are not in a position at present to complete nominations to the Bureau since some regional groups need to continue their consultations.

As this process is going to require more time to reach a final result, it might be advisable for the Commission to suspend this organizational session so that delegations can complete their consultations on these issues. If there is no objection, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to suspend the 2006 organizational session and to resume it at a later date.

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I suspend the meeting, I should like to encourage regional groups to complete their consultations as soon as possible and to submit their nominations as quickly as possible.

The resumption of this meeting of the Disarmament Commission will be announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*.

The meeting was suspended at 10.40 a.m.